

I am opposed to the elimination of Element 1, from the licensing requirements for Amateur operators of general class and higher. Morse code may have been displaced in daily use by other modes of digital operation, but in times of emergency, it is still the most reliable choice. In case of total power grid failure, or an electro-magnetic emergency, newer high tech radio and computer equipment may be totally inoperative. Morse code may be the only viable means of communications. There could easily be conditions when power was not available to run the computers for the high tech digital modes, or for the sophisticated high frequency radios. During these times, a low power portable radio, using morse code would be able to communicate.

I am a volunteer examiner, and at no time has it been a burden for anyone on our test team to administer the Element 1 examination. Further, I was never contacted as to supporting any move to remove the element 1 requirement.

The 5wpm Element 1 test is not an unreasonable requirement, and is attainable with study and practice.

Becoming an amateur radio operator is not a right, it requires a license and must be earned. By removing yet another test element required to earn this privilege, we further dilute the talent pool. This will result in an influx of licensees who have passed nothing more than a multiple-choice examination, which only requires the memorization of a few questions and the appropriate response. The amateur radio service was not founded to promote a pool of appliance operators, and this is where some of the proposed rule making changes are taking us.

Amateur radio licensees have very broad privileges spanning continents on a wide spectrum of frequencies adjacent to and shared with other radio services. Testing for admission to the amateur radio service must reflect the responsibility to serve the nation with the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge unique to that service. The nation must be assured that the amateur radio operators represent our high standards.

The lowering of standards for admission into about everything seems to be the norm. The amateur radio service should not cater to this trend. This is a matter of world leadership, national pride, community service and national emergency preparedness.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Floyd Whitham
ARS K9FRW
Vevay, Indiana